



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

January 11, 2006

TO: Superintendents, Building Administrators, Curriculum & Assessment Directors, Lead Science Educators and Science Department Chairpersons

FROM: Linda Lacy, Education Consultant, Science Curriculum

RE: Recruitment of Key Leaders and Points of Contact for the Missouri Building a Presence for Science Network

As the science consultant for the Department, I know that teachers and other district personnel need to stay current with changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment that exist in response to the No Child Left Behind Act and recent Missouri State Board of Education policies. As a former classroom teacher, I know that keeping up with news from DESE, National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), Science Teachers of Missouri (STOM), and others in the science teaching/learning community is sometimes very difficult. Often news may not reach the classroom in time for participation in an important science professional development opportunity or a challenging student competition or scholarship opportunity. The abilities to increase student achievement, to promote student interest in science-, math-, engineering-, and technology-related careers; and to build and retain leadership capacity among science educators are inhibited by this lack of information and opportunity to further learning.

Through a collaborative effort involving Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), STOM, and DESE, we are *very excited* to announce the launch of the **Missouri Building a Presence for Science** Network. This innovative, award-winning science education reform program, which began in 1996 by NSTA, has the potential to help Missouri attain the following:

Goals of the Missouri Building a Presence for Science Network:

- To improve the learning of science by strengthening the quality of science teaching
- To create a network to end isolation by linking all science educators across the state
- Improve understanding and implementation of state curriculum standards and assessment program
- Facilitate professional development opportunities and disseminate resources
- Build leadership capacity in the field of science education

The Online Communication System

The *Building a Presence* (BaP) Online System is designed to create a central database of teachers, organizations, businesses and industries, and others responsible for both formal and informal science education in the state, and to provide a powerful communication platform that would allow a steady flow of information, not only among state participants but also from NSTA and the program's National Partners to the participants through coordinator-monitored communications. With one click of a button, coordinators will be able to update teachers through monthly emails (E-blasts) with curriculum and assessment news and documents, conference and workshop information from around the state, competition and scholarship opportunities, and other information that can provide support. State-level partners (e.g., businesses, industries, informal science educators, institutions of higher education) will also

be able to share similar information through the BaP coordinator who will update Key Leaders using that same “real-time” system.

The National Network

The National Science Teachers’ Association (NSTA) is the world’s largest organization of science educators. Its 55,000 members are science teachers at all grade levels, science supervisors, administrators, scientists, business and industry representatives and others in science education. The NSTA, the program’s 27 national partners and 34 participating states form an effective and powerful communications network. The organization maintains the network system for each state.

- National and state contacts electronically disseminate science education information to state coordinators.
- BaP Online offers state message boards, group email options, monthly E-blasts and other features facilitating electronic communications.
- BaP Online lets each state maintain and update its own confidential network roster.
- Professional development workshops and BaP sessions are offered at NSTA and state science teacher association meetings.

How Building a Presence for Science Works at the State Level

- Establish a partnership among state science teachers associations, the state education department, other state-based education organizations, science educators, and others interested in providing and/or promoting science education.
- Form a state network of State Co-Coordinators, a Steering Committee/Advisory Board, Key Leaders, Points of Contact and program partners.
- Identify Key Leaders to serve larger geographic areas and identify a teacher in every K-12 school in their area to be a Point of Contact for science.
- Communicate information about needs and resources to and from colleagues via teachers serving as the Points of Contact.
- Offer professional development sessions and standards-based resources and materials to network members through statewide and/or regionally-based meetings.

Funding

Building a Presence for Science is administrated at the national level by the National Science Teachers Association. The ExxonMobil Foundation provided over \$6 million, from 1996 to 2004, to support Building a Presence for Science in the original 27 Phase I and Phase II states. Individual states are also funded by local foundations, organizations, industries, and other interested supporters of science education.

There is NO cost to schools, Key Leaders, or Points of Contact. The network is free to science educators. However, *Missouri is currently seeking funding to support the cost of start-up and sustainability of the BaP Online Communication system and professional development program.*

How Your Science Educators can be Involved

Our immediate goals are to:

- Identify Key Leaders and Points of Contact in every building within the next 90 days;
- Email the first E-blast to all Key Leaders by February 1; and
- Provide the first training for Key Leaders Spring of 2006.

The success of the program is dependent upon the networking of all stakeholders: DESE, school districts, science educators, and partners. To help us meet the statewide goals please:

1. Review the enclosed descriptions of Key Leader and Point of Contact roles and responsibilities and the Key Leader application.

2. Identify at least one (ideally two) teachers in each building who are willing to serve as a Point of Contact between their Key Leader and all others responsible for science education in the building. Ideally, no Key Leader or Point of Contact should be expected to support more than thirty educators. If a specific building in your district houses more than the thirty, please consider designating grade-span Points of Contact (e.g., an elementary building housing grades K-6 with a certified staff population greater than 30 may wish to designate a Point of Contact for each grade level).

To Become a Point of Contact, the teacher needs to visit the NSTA Building a Presence for Science website at <http://www.nsta.org/bap>.

- Select “Missouri” and “submit.”
- Type in the “school building name,” “city,” and/or “zip code” and “submit.”
- Select your building from the list of identified schools. (If your building is not listed, please contact a co-coordinator listed below.)
- Complete the personal, school, and demographic information; select a username and password; and “submit.”

If submission is complete, that person will receive an email message from a co-coordinator verifying receipt of their request to participate and will be assigned to a Key Leader if one is needed in the building.

3. If you have a staff member responsible for science education who you recommend as a Key Leader, provide that person with this information and encourage them to submit an online BaP Key Leader application, located on the Science Curriculum page of the DESE website:
<http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/curriculum/newwebpages/science.html>.
4. Support the network by providing time and financial resources for Key Leaders and Points of Contact to take part in professional development opportunities and to share information with colleagues.

To find out more about the BaP program and how to be involved in Missouri BaP, contact:

Linda Lacy, Mo-BaP Co-Coordinator, MO Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, at linda.lacy@dese.mo.gov

Dr. Rebecca Litherland, Mo-BaP Co-Coordinator, NSTA District Director, at rlith5000@charter.net

Elizabeth Petersen, STOM President-Elect, at epetersen@ladue.k12.mo.us

Missouri Building a Presence for Science, at <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/curriculum/newwebpages/science.html>

Building a Presence for Science, at <http://www.nsta.org/bap>

*Creating a comprehensive electronic network and staff development program
for science educators*

Building a Presence for Science in Missouri

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